Reading Response

I enjoyed reading the first two chapters of “My Freshman Year” because throughout the whole thing I could relate to different bits and pieces of her experience, often right down to the little details. The idea that somebody so much older than I would take in the freshman year experience similar to the way I did when I first got here this year is something definitely worth looking into. I liked the part where she analyzed the door decorations of the people on her dorm floor. In class we have been talking about dorm decorations and why they may be the way they are. At first it seemed pointless to me to ask “why” anybody does anything. My immediate perception is that every person is different in the way they do anything, so why question it? There is no set answer. Although that may be true, there is some similarity among student decorations. Upon reading her analyzing descriptions of the dorm doors, it became a little clearer to me as to why people decorate their dorms with so many “fake” pictures of them and their friends. According to her, it is because they want people to see them as “fun” and “spontaneous”. It’s easier to make friends that way. People like fun and spontaneous people. Aside from that little realization, I enjoyed feeling the same feeling over again that welcome weekend brought through reading about her experience with it.

The first chapter of “On Ethnography” was hard for me to get through, with having to look up words every so often for their meanings. However, once I knew what the vocabulary meant, it was a bit easier to understand. I do enjoy the idea of looking at people and how they act and react as a means of depicting their culture. It’s just getting to the point where you know what to look for in people to find the culture that confuses me. They talk about language as a model and vehicle but in reality I think my problem with the chapter is that there is no set “answer” as to why things are the way they are in a culture. There are things that help add to the answer, but as a person who would like to know the “why” of everything, the ambiguity of the study doesn’t click for me.